

Virginia Surgical Arts, LLC
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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

For Problems or Questions Call 430-7690

DRIVING/ WALKING: Patients who have received oral pre-medications or intravenous medications should not drive for 24 hours. They should also walk with assistance to avoid stumbling and injury until fully recovered from the anesthetic.

BLEEDING: Immediately after surgery, you must bite on the gauze pads for 20-30 minutes at a time. Initially the gauze may be blood soaked and will require discarding for clean gauze at each 20-30 minute intervals. You should expect less bleeding over several hours but bleeding can sometimes take up to 8-10 hours to finally stop. Some intermittent oozing can still be seen in the first 24-48 hours. **Rinsing, excessive talking or physical activity should be avoided for the first 24 hours. Do not spit; use a straw or smoke for at least 2-3 days.** If bleeding recurs or continues, place a damp tea bag directly on the wound and bite down on it for at least one hour. Remember: Positioning of the gauze or tea bag is very important.

POSITIONING: You must keep your head and upper body elevated for the first 48 hours. When sleeping, maintain approximately 30-45 degree elevation. A lazy-boy type recliner works best that leans only half way back. Refrain from even bending over to pick something up or placement / removal of your shoes.

ICE AND SWELLING: Following all surgical procedures, apply an ice or cold pack to the affected jaw alternating 20 minutes on with 20 minutes off, for up to 48 hours. Following the first 48 hours, the ice should be replaced by warm, moist compresses. Swelling or bruising can be expected with some surgeries of both the gum tissue and the face. **Swelling is expected to peak by the 3rd morning following surgery and this is normal.** It is helpful to apply the ice for up to 48 hours with the heat following for this reason.

MEDICATION: For more significant surgery, prescription pain medication is commonly needed and can be taken even before the numbness wears off. Follow all instructions given with any prescription medications provided (such as no driving while using pain medications). **Additional use of Motrin (Advil, Ibuprofen) 600 mg dose taken every 6-8 hours to supplement the narcotic pain medicine is recommended** (if no contra-indications are present). This minimizes the need for the narcotic and in some cases will provide enough post-operative pain relief alone. Attempt to stagger the dosing schedule with the other prescription medications if possible. Ideally all the medications should be taken with some food in the stomach. Post-operative nausea is usually due to one of the medications (especially when taken on an empty stomach). If this occurs, stop the use of all medications until the stomach has settled before resuming any of them. If persistent nausea or vomiting occurs, please call our office. **Birth control pills may not be effective during a cycle while on antibiotics.** Additional contraception should be used.

ORAL HYGIENE: After the first 24 hours, begin rinsing with warm salt water (1/4 teaspoon of salt in 8oz. of warm water) following every meal and at bedtime to keep the wound(s) cleansed of food debris. Brushing to all areas except the wound site can be resumed after the first 24 hours. Brushing the wound site should not be attempted for at least one week and should be done gently until the tenderness resolves. In some cases, a syringe with instructions will be provided to irrigate the wound(s).

SMOKING: Smoking delays healing and increases your chances of infection, pain and/or dry socket. Smoking should be prohibited for at least the first 2-3 days immediately following surgery.

DIET: Immediately following surgery, some milk shake or smoothie is recommended to help settle the stomach and provide a treat postoperatively. Use a spoon only and avoid using a straw. You may temporarily remove the gauze pads while having your shake but you should then re-place them with clean dry pads in the mouth again. Later in the day your diet should consist of soups, juice, yogurt, or even scrambled eggs and pasta just to cite a few examples. Avoid hot or spicy foods for 3-5 days. Nothing harder than pasta should be eaten the first week after which time the diet may be increased **gradually** to harder foods as tolerated (if it hurts to eat something...you're not ready to eat that food yet.) **Eating crunchy foods such as popcorn, peanuts is prohibited for up to 6-8 weeks.**

ACTIVITY: No heavy lifting or exertional activity is permitted the first 3-5 days post-op and exercise or sports should be omitted up to one week after surgery. For patients that underwent IV anesthesia, a patient caregiver is required during the first post-op evening and no driving or operation of equipment or appliances should be permitted the first 24 hours. Nor should signing of any legal documents or life changing decisions be made during this time (following IV anesthesia).

STITCHES: Absorbable sutures may fall out in 3-10 days at they're own pace. **It is important to keep your tongue away from the wound site** during this healing time so as not to disturb the sutures or healing process. Any problematic sutures can be easily removed during a routine post-op visit. Eating on the opposite side if possible is recommended for several weeks.

DRY SOCKET: If pain increases (such as intense and relentless throbbing or aching) is noted into the 3-4 day post-op period, you may have developed a dry socket condition. This is not serious and is actually not an infection but can be a nuisance. Thankfully it is easily managed and most often requires only the extended use of Motrin and time to resolve. More severe symptoms (including pain to the ear and headaches) can be treated at our office with a sedative dressing placed into the wound site. Smoking is known to severely increase chances of developing a dry socket.

BONY EDGES: Within weeks after teeth are extracted, occasionally bone spurs may appear or emerge from the gum tissue. This is not serious and will most often work out of the tooth socket and resolve spontaneously. They may be easily removed in the office as needed if no signs of improvement are seen within a week.

1 WEEK POST-OPERATIVE EXPERIENCE: the wounds following oral surgery require approximately 6 to 8 weeks for full healing and so one week following surgery is still very early in the healing process. By one week it is normal to still have soreness and tenderness to the wound areas. A certain measure of intermittent aching and throbbing is also quite normal which should be relieved with an adequate dose of ibuprofen or similar anti-inflammatory. Jaw stiffness is also expected in this early stage and it can take up to an additional week to regain the normal range of opening.

EMERGENCY QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS: If any problems or questions arise that you feel needs immediate attention prior to your post-op visit, please call our office at **(757)430-7690**. After office hours, instructions are provided so that someone can be available to respond to your call.

Your speedy recovery is very important to us and we hope to get you through your healing as easily as possible. We believe that strict adherence to these instructions will help and appreciate your cooperation.

– **Sergio Vendetti MD, DMD**

Refunds are NOT permitted for medications dispensed/purchased in our office.